Black, Nick "The aetiology of glue ear-a case-control study" International Journal of Pediatric Otorhinolaryngology 9: 121-133, 1985.

This case-control study was designed to investigate the possible causes of glue ear (otitis media) in childhood. One hundred and fifty cases with two matched controls each made up the study population. Five factors were found to increase the risk of a child's undergoing surgery for glue ear: 1) parental smoking; 2) the child's mother being employed outside the home, but only if the father is employed in non-manual work; 3) attending pre-school day-care; 4) having an older sibling who had been diagnosed as suffering from glue ear; and 5) having been born locally. The author found that only one of these factors, parental smoking, appeared to be related to the actual development of glue ear. The other four factors were reportedly found to be related only to the chances of glue ear being detected in the child.

The children studied in this investigation were aged 4-9 years and had undergone a first operation for glue ear within the previous 30 months at the Radcliffe Infirmary in Oxford and was a resident of Oxford. The parents of these children were interviewed to obtain data on their child's medical, birth, family and social histories. Each of the cases was matched with two controls. One control was a child matched on age and sex who had attended a follow-up outpatient appointment in the general surgical or orthoptic departments. The second control was a child matched on age and sex from the same school class who was also the next child alphabetically of the same sex on the class roster.

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